



ATTENTION-DEFICIT/HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER: A NEW PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAM

WHAT IS THE PUBLIC HEALTH PROBLEM?

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a neurobehavioral disorder that may affect more than 3 million school-aged children and can last into adulthood. ADHD manifests as an unusually high and chronic level of inattention, impulsivity/hyperactivity, or both. If untreated, people with ADHD often struggle with impairments in crucial areas of life, including relationships with peers and family members and performance at school or work. Increases in injuries and health care utilization have been noted in some studies of people with ADHD. As many as half of children with ADHD also have other behavior problems. Some studies have demonstrated increases in substance abuse, risk taking, and criminal behaviors among adolescents and adults who have ADHD. The treatment for ADHD is primarily pharmacologic. Controversies over the wide use and safety of medication treatments have increased over the last decade. The United States is the leading consumer of medications for ADHD in the world.

WHAT HAS CDC ACCOMPLISHED?

- Continued to bolster interest and collaboration with other federal agencies in child mental health by participating in the Federal Interagency Working Group on Child Mental Health.
- Funded Children and Adults with Hyperactivity-Attention Deficit Disorder (CHADD) to establish the Web-based National Resource Center on Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder.
- Awarded three cooperative agreements (to sites in Oklahoma, South Carolina, and Virginia) to conduct community-based research on ADHD, including population-based studies of prevalence, risk factors, comorbidities, and treatment information.
- Published peer-reviewed journal article on epidemiologic research methods in ADHD.

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

- Work with CHADD to expand the National Resource Center.
- Collaborate with grantees on study design and methodology to establish a common research protocol for community-based research in ADHD.
- Continue to work with partners to promote data collection and to apply epidemiologic methodology to the study of ADHD.
- Continue to develop and distribute health education and outreach materials for ADHD.
- Strengthen collaborations with federal and non-federal partners.

For further information about this or other CDC programs, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/programs>

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